



Supported Decision-Making

What is Supported Decision Making?

- **A process in which people make as many of their own choices as possible** with the assistance of supporter(s) ONLY as necessary (e.g., establish a Financial Power of Attorney over finances only, allowing the person to make other decisions about their life).
- **A concept that recognizes and prioritizes the person's own voice, preferences and opinions.**
- **A nationally-recognized best practice for tailoring assistance to the person's unique needs**, if possible without removing an individual's independence or self-determination. Read more from the national level at: www.supporteddecisionmaking.org.

Why is Supported Decision Making important for people with disabilities?

- **People with disabilities face long-standing biases about perceived abilities**, including decision-making. Most people can make at least some decisions about their lives, and it is their right to do so.
- **Decision-making is a learned skill that requires encouragement and practice.** However, in supporting people with disabilities, professionals and loved ones often use substitute decision-making rather than supporting the person to make their own decisions. With the best intentions, we think and speak *for* the person rather than thinking *with* the person and encouraging them to speak for themselves.
- **Research shows us that maximizing choice and control (self-determination) in a person's life increases positive outcomes in health, happiness, and safety** through stronger relationships and better ability to recognize and resist abuse.
- **Without Supported Decision Making, many individuals and their families face a false choice between no assistance in making decisions or seeking conservatorship.** Conservatorship is not appropriate for everyone; individuals and families need more options. For people who are not appropriate for conservatorship because they CAN make at least some of their own decisions, Supported Decision Making can help meet their needs.

For more information, contact:

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